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Atari Online News, Etc.
A-ONE Online Magazine
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http://people.delphi.com/dpj/a-one.htm
http://www.icwhen.com/aone/
http://a1mag.atari.org
Now available:
http://www.atarinews.org


Visit the Atari Advantage Forum on Delphi!
http://forums.delphi.com/m/main.asp?sigdir=atari




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A-ONE #0311                                                 03/16/01

   ~ Web Tax Ban Extended!  ~ People Are Talking!    ~ Tron.com Launched!
   ~ Double-density CD-RWs!  ~ Sony, Connectix "Join"  ~ Ax86 Project Update!
   ~ Congress Goes For Spam  ~ Console Gaming News!   ~ CTT60 Update!

                    -* Pig Latin Fools Napster Block *-

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                    -*   Napster Music Trading Plummets!   *-
                 -* Delphi To Cease Text-based Support May 1st *-



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->From the Editor's Keyboard              "Saying it like it is!"
  """"""""""""""""""""""""""""""


It's been one of those weeks where it was neither good, or bad.  It just
seemed to go by in an uneventful manner.  However, the one unique thing
about it was that the temperatures have started to get normal, for this
area.  Definition - it got relatively warmer.  Spring _may_ be close at
hand!  I certainly hope so.  While I'm not one of those people who hates the
snow and cold of winter, it does get tiresome after awhile! <vbg>

This week, Delphi users - especially those of us who are old-timers there -
received some bad news: Delphi will be shutting down its text-based services
at the end of next month.  Personally for many, this will be an end of an
era!  I've logged many hours on this system since 1987.  It was fast and
dependable.  The users were the best of the three major online service in
its heyday: Delphi, GEnie, and CompuServe.  It outlasted them all.  Gone
will be BBS-style message bases, download databases, text-based chat, and
many other favorites of a text-based system.  While the Atari Advantage
forum will survive and remain on Delphi, it won't be the same.  Even our
longtime @Delphi.com username and e-mail addresses will die along with it.
We're hoping that we can save the downloads that might otherwise be lost
forever, but that's not even known if it's possible.  I hope we'll know
soon.  While I'm one to recognize and support the need for advances in
technology, sometimes technology stinks, simply put!  Stay tuned over the
next couple of weeks for updates as some of our e-mail will need to be re-
directed to new addresses, and our e-mail subscription process will be
changing.

I'd like to thank those of you who have taken the time to drop me a line
offering kind thoughts and condolences for the recent loss of my mother.
I cannot express enough how much it all means to me.  Things are getting
better, partly due to the support you've given me these past few weeks.  I
truly appreciate that, thanks.

Until next time...



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                 Delphi Text-based Services Are Ending On May 1

                 ***  Important information about Delphi services ***


As of May 1, 2001, Delphi will be discontinuing all text-based
services, email accounts and legacy chat services (including live
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games). As we notified you last year, these services have been unsupported since November 1, and billing for premium services was discontinued.

As of May 1, Delphi email will be inaccessible, and email forwarding will no longer function. Also, those Web forums that have opted to revert to the legacy chat service will need to use the newer version of Delphi.com chat. The new chat system does not support live games, and some of the functionality of the legacy chat system has not yet been developed for the newer version of chat.

We hope that this notice and the one we sent you last fall will give you enough time to make alternate arrangements.

Q & A -

(Q) Why is Delphi making these changes?
(A) The text-based services, legacy chat and email services are all based on a technical platform that cannot be maintained on a cost-effective basis.

(Q) How do I know if my email account is affected?
(A) If your email address ends in "@delphi.com" you will need to make alternate arrangements. Most Internet service providers supply email accounts. There are also several free web-based email providers such as Hotmail (http://www.hotmail.com), Yahoo (http://mail.yahoo.com). You should notify anyone who sends you email of your new address as soon as possible.

(Q) I've already set up forwarding for my Delphi email account. Isn't that sufficient?
(A) No. The systems that are being retired include the forwarding functionality, so mail sent to your "@delphi.com" address will bounce back to the sender after May 1.

(Q) I use the text-based games such as TQ and Scramble on the Web, will these be discontinued?
(A) Since these live games are based on the old platform, they will be discontinued.

(Q) I run a forum on the Delphi.com Web site and I still use the old chat system. What do I have to do?

(A) You can change your chat selection to the new chat system from your forum control center at any time. If you do not do so by May 1, we will take care of it for you.

(Q) I participate in role playing games that rely on certain functions of the legacy chat system like the "/act" and "/roll" commands. Will these be available in the new chat system?

(A) We may be adding those features to the new chat system, but it is not likely that those functions will be available in new chat before the old chat system is retired on May 1.

We have established a mutual assistance Forum on Delphi Text Side.  Just type GO COMP LIFE to get there.  This Forum may be able to help you select a new e-mail provider or answer questions about Web access or choice of browsers.  This Forum is only accessible via telnet.

We regret that no Delphi staff members are available to assist in this Forum, but we hope you will find assistance from other Delphi members there.

We appreciate your support of Delphi over the years and look forward to your continued participation in Delphi.com on the Web.

## Ax86 Project

The latest news on the Ax86 project..

Two coders are active. One is working on fast 68040+FPU+MMU emulation based on UAE 68k/Basilisk code. This part is almost complete.

JIT is also planned for excellent speed of 68k emulation.

The second coder is currently writing a big hack on TOS 4.04.

NO Release date is available at this time.

The Ax86 project's goal is to create a TOS clone that will run on X86 based computer systems.

## CTT60 Replaces CTT

CTT Update

Rodolphe Czuba of Czuba-Tech has announced that "the CTT project with a 030 and EDO memory is cancelled!"

"If I design a booster for TT030, it will be with a 060 + SDRAM like the CT60."

Please see the latest features and prices of the CT60 for your TT030 that is now called CTT60.

"All the features are identical with CT60, except the fact that between 10 to 15 wires will need to be soldered for the TT version !

The TT mainboard will NOT be accelerated!"

Visit the CZUBA-TECH homepage for more information.

http://www.czuba-tech.com

## Tron.Com Launched

A new internet site, labelled Tron.Com has been launched.

If you remember the old days of the Atari ST demo scene, you would have probably come across the demo groups Effect, Sublime and Kuba.

We produced disks that featured the latest releases from the Atari scene
for that era.  Started in 1993 and finishing in 1996, you can track the
Atari demo scene with the aid of the Effect Industrially Safe Demo Disks.

Other compilation series included, Agricultural Games Disks, Mega Illusive
GIF Disks and Ninistral Module Disks.

90% of Effect, Kuba and Sublime releases are featured on this web site,
complete with a screen shot and the contents of each compilation.

http://tron.atari.org


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                          PEOPLE ARE TALKING
                        compiled by Joe Mirando
                         jmirando@portone.com


Hidi ho friends and neighbors. Another week has come and gone, and
spring must surely be on its way. Everyone around here is pretty much
sick of the snow and ice... with the exception of myself, of course. I
don't like or dislike it, I simply accept it.

I'm lucky enough to be able to pick and choose whether or not I
want/need to deal with things like snow banks. Someone else plows the
sidewalks and driveway (ah, there ARE good points to having a
landlord), and the roads here are kept in fairly good shape during the
winter months. So, right there, the major problems have been alleviated.

I've always thought of winter as the time that mother earth uses to get
ready for spring. I know, it's silly, but seeing things go from being
cold and devoid of growth to green and bursting with new life just
seems to fit with that childish impression.

Now being a bit of an astronomy nut, I could quote you the reasons for
the change of the seasons and the distances and degrees and such, but
that simple thought of nature "resting up" for spring strikes a chord
somewhere in me.

Of course, I don't live in extreme latitudes either, so nature only
takes a short snooze instead of a protracted snore-session. That
probably helps.

While everyone around me gripes about the cold and snow, a visitor from
the arctic circle would simply laugh and comment on how warm it was.
Everything is relative. One person's cold is another's balmy.

The same it true with computers. One person's dream machine is
another's clunker. I know as many people who have a PC stuck away in
the closet while they continue to use an Atari as I do people with
Atari computers stuck away in the closet while they use an Intel
machine. Of course, that cuts out the vast majority of computer users.
Most users today are johnny-come-latelies, so they never had an
Atari... or Commodore, or Acorn, or Sinclair, or... or... <grin>

The bottom line is that you've got to do what's right for you. As long as you ain't hurting anyone take a personal note from Nike and "just do it".

One other thing I want to ask you about is the fact that Delphi has recently announced that their text-side chat rooms and email are not going to be available after May 1, 2001. Personally, I'm very disappointed. But beyond that, we're mulling over the possibility of providing chat rooms on AtariNews.Org.

Atari-Users.Net is considering updating their chat software also, and of course they already provide free email... although you need to be able to use JAVA to access some of the features.

Good chat software would seem to be an easy hack. I mean, we've been chatting online for years, right? It must surely be possible to find an acceptable solution then, shouldn't it? Well guess again. There are lots of packages out there, but most of them are marginal at best.

If you know of chat software that stands out from the rest, please email me at joe@atarinews.org. Thanks.


Now let's get on with the news and stuff from the UseNet.


From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup
===================================


Paul "Switchblade" asks about replacing an Atari mouse:

"Just bought a 520STFM second-hand, to play some of those old games and demos in their true environment.

But... the Atari mouse has broken, didn't realize until I tried it... one of the "wheel" holders inside has been removed, hence trying to move left or right won't work... anyway...the question is, can i just plug in a normal PC serial mouse or is the Atari one a peculiarity?"

Iggy Drougge tells Paul:

"In actuality, the PC mouse is a peculiarity, usually using some kind of serial protocol and on-board logic as opposed to the raw quadrature data supplied by the Atari mouse for processing inside the Atari. You could, however, adapt a PC "bus" mouse, if you could find one.

Otherwise, it's possible to use alternate and the cursor keys for moving the pointer, as well as alternate+insert for left clicking."

Djordje Vukovic provides another, if more severe, alternative:

"It appears that any serial mouse can be adapted to Atari by a rather severe hack - that info floated into comp.sys.atari.st.tech a while ago.

And it looked reasonable and perfectly feasible. It amounted to: rip-off (almost) all electronics from the mouse ( leave just the LEDs, photodiodes and power-supply resistor(s) ) and squeeze in one TTL-compatible buffer chip for the quadrature signals. Then change the

cable, because more wires would be needed. On the other hand, WHY would one do so is questionable - maybe only if someone had an especially nice-looking and mechanically sound serial mouse and he wanted to use it on an Atari."

Bob King posts this about his son and his Falcon:

"My guitarist/composer son has attracted the attention of various bodies in the recording and music business with his CD and a professional recording engineer has just told him that his four acoustic guitar track/ 6 midi track CD, 'is the clearest acoustic guitar CD he has ever heard'. When told it was produced on a C-Lab MkX Falcon with Cubase Audio, the Engineer got in three of his colleagues to listen. Disbelief all round. He told Steven not to change to PC/Apple unless forced to.

Steven is getting a Web site set up by a pro, and I will make sure that ATARI is mentioned as many times as possible!!!!"

        [Editor's note] Now THAT is the kind of thing I like to hear!

Carey Christenson posts this about two of my all-time favorite programs:

"I have been using GENEVA and NEODESK demos for the last 2 months off and on (the sample program).  Although it is limited on some of its functions.  It has interested me enough to consider buying this great software package.  I have all the pertinent information.

Gribnif Software
(413) 247-5620
GENEVA 6.0 and NEODESK 4
p.o. BOX 779
Northampton, MA 01061-0779
USA

They also have a 1-800-284-4742 for technical help.

When purchased you get a detailed manual with everything to install this great software already setup and ready to go.  Just install and reboot and your ready.  I have seen the desktop and on the demo it is much better than TOS ever was if the full version is even better it is money well spent."

The author of both programs, Dan Wilga, tells Carey:

"Just to clarify a bit, our current phone number is 413-532-2434. We no longer maintain an 800 number.

You can reach us by email at gribnif@pair.com, and our web site is http://www.pair.com/gribnif ."

Edward Baiz adds:

"Geneva also works great with the EASE desktop."

Djordje Vukovic jumps in and adds to the list:

"I would like to mention that it also works nice with PD desktop Teradesk 1.4a which I found excellent for a system with limited memory (i.e. ST, STE, MegaST, MegaSTE). The desktop program is VERY small (about 100 KB) and at first sight it looks almost like the original TOS 2.06 desktop.

In fact, if it only had a few more options I would like, I'd use
Geneva+Teradesk as permanent setup. It is a pity this desktop has not
been developed more."

Gil Bavel asks about swapping a CDROM from his Amiga:

"I have a SCSI external CD-Rom drive I use for my Amigas and Macs, How
can I use it with my Atari ST?"

Jim DeClercq tells Gil:

"Mostly, plug it in. But you will need a small bit of hardware to
convert the Atari Computer System Interface into the Shughart Computer
System Interface, sold as Link, Link 2, Link 97.  These look like
cables with a lump of electronics at one end."

Steve Sweet adds:

"Firstly you'd need a SCSI adaptor of some sorts, presumably you
already have a SCSI hard disk in which case you have that already,
if not then you'l not get far without one.

In total you'd need a SCSI adaptor, i suggest the 'Link', a Hard disk
driver, I suggest 'HD-Driver', some CD software, that could be got for
nowt if you want and thats called 'SPIN'.

You'd need to connect your CD rom into the SCSI chain after any
existing Hard Drive, you'l need to make sure any termination is removed
from the Hard Drive and if your using a 'LINK', that TermPwr is enabled
by either the CD-ROM or the HD, preferably both, you'l then need to
change the SCSI ID of the CD-ROM so thats its higher than the HD's ID
as HD-driver will try to boot off the lowest ID, you will need to
terminate the CD-ROM using its on-board termination or by external
means.

Now, install and set up all the software as per the FM's and all should
work."

Dr. Uwe Seimet tells Steve:

"This is not correct. TOS is responsible for selecting the device it
will boot from, not the hard disk driver. And TOS will only boot from
bootable hard disk partitions, not from a CD-ROM. TOS will ignore it and
will try the next device."

Carey Christenson asks about connecting to the internet:

"I am using STING version 1.20 with DIALER version 1.16 and am having
problems with CAB 1.5 and aICQ functioning properly.  With CAB 1.5 I
can type in a URL then it kicks me out of the program and gives me
some bombshells on the screen if I try to go back to CAB it locks up.
With aICQ it boots up and I try to enter in stuff for new user and it
does pretty much the same thing.  But I use NEWSIE96 and I have know
problems.  I would say that if I do not transmit data or receive data
for 10 to 15 minutes I will lose my connection.  Do I have something
configured wrong in the KONTOLLFELDER at the top when you go to desk
and click on this program STING PORT and STING INTERNALS comes up
along with my other CPX modules.  I guess I am trying to say WHAT AM I
DOING WRONG!!!!!!!??????!!!!!  Have not encountered this problem until
about a 2 or 3 weeks ago.  I had been able to use my CAB 1.5 just

fine.  Any help on this matter would be greatly appreciated.  I am
using a 1040STf with 2.5 megs of RAM and US ROBOTICS 14400 modem if
this helps.  If a newer version of STING is needed please include it
as I cannot go on the web with my ST to grab the newer version.  Since
CAB 1.5 is also acting up.  I would very much like to get my aICQ to
work with STING as well as CAB 1.5.  Thanks for any help that can be
given."

Derryck Croker tells Carey:

"If it had been working fine then you must ask yourself what's changed.
Have you been playing around in the auto folder? Perhaps you've got the
running order wrong, so that sting.prg no longer runs after the hsmodem
stuff as it should.

As for the CPXs, you only need serial.cpx and the internals CPX (the
latter isn't needed with the latest STinG BTW)."


Well folks, that's it for this week. Tune in again next week, same
time, same station, and be ready to listen to what they are saying
when...


PEOPLE ARE TALKING



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->In This Week's Gaming Section  - "UnReal" Tournament!  Triple Play!
  """""""""""""""""""""""""""""""    Sony, Connectix "Join" Forces!
                                     Escape From Monkey Island!
                                     And much more!



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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News   -  The Latest Gaming News!
  """""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""



                Sony Acquires Virtual Game Station From Connectix


It appears that former legal adversaries Sony and Connectix Corp. are now
joining forces. The companies today announced a "joint technology
agreement" that puts an end to their long-running legal battles. This new
announcement may also signal the end of Virtual Game Station, at least as
we know it today.

Emulation software maker Connectix Corp. first raised the ire of Sony
Computer Entertainment in 1999, when Connectix released Virtual Game
Station for the Macintosh. Virtual Game Station is a Sony Playstation

emulator that enables computers to run many software titles developed for use with the popular PlayStation video game console.

Released first for the Mac, Virtual Game Station was later put into limbo when the U.S. District Court ordered a preliminary injunction which prevented Connectix from selling or distributing the software. Retail copies of Virtual Game Station were just starting to dwindle almost a year later when the injunction was lifted, enabling Connectix to continue to sell and develop the software.

Sony has attempted numerous legal roadblocks since then, but has been thwarted at almost every turn, including a refusal to hear their case by the Supreme Court last October. The companies were to go to a jury trial this month to resolve Sony's complaint that Connectix misappropriated trade secrets and provided unfair competition.

Connectix has released a new version of the emulator with added compatibility and some improvements, and has also introduced a PC version of the emulator. All the while, Connectix president Roy McDonald has steadfastly defended his company's development of Virtual Game Station.

Now it appears that Sony has adopted the old adage, "If you can't beat 'em, join 'em." In a press release today, the companies announced that they will "proceed to define a series of development initiatives in the area of advanced emulation solutions."

The companies stopped short of announcing what forms these product development initiatives will take, but Connectix president Roy McDonald says that the new arrangement will give his company the ability to develop new applications for their emulation technology.

"We believe that this collaboration can lead to improved development tools, innovative consumer products and productive enterprise solutions," said McDonald.

Sony senior VP of research and development Shinichi Okamoto also said that Sony is looking forward to advances in emulation as a result of the new partnership, citing Connectix's ownership of "excellent technology in this field."

As part of the agreement, both companies have resolved the myriad legal issues still outstanding regarding Virtual Game Station, and Sony will acquire all core assets from Connectix related to Virtual Game Station. Connectix will still sell the current version to Mac and Windows users through June, and will continue to provide support as well. "All further emulation development ... will proceed under the auspices of the joint agreement," said the companies.


   Infogrames Blasts Onto SegaNet With Unreal Tournament for Sega Dreamcast


Fraggers get your twitchy finger ready!

Infogrames, Inc. announced that its raucous first person action game, Unreal Tournament for Sega Dreamcast will begin shipping to stores this week.

This award-winning thriller takes full advantage of the Dreamcast

technology including SegaNet's fast and furious multiplayer online option
that allows for an unprecedented eight players to battle it out against
each other online, as well as the optional broadband adapter that provides
faster more furious online gameplay.

''Unreal Tournament is by far the best online action game available for the
Dreamcast," said Barbara Gleason, director of marketing for Infogrames'
San Jose label. ''With more than a million copies sold, the original game
was a phenomenal success and has won many awards including PC Game of the
Year. Now with added gameplay features and the online capabilities of the
Dreamcast, console fans will get the opportunity to experience the same
robust online gameplay that PC gamers have enjoyed."

Receiving many awards and accolades for its intense multi-player action,
Unreal Tournament, originally developed by Epic Games, has set the standard
for finely tuned first-person perspective action.

After careful consideration by Infogrames and Epic Games, Secret Level,
based in San Francisco, was chosen to produce Unreal Tournament for
Dreamcast. Designed specifically for the Dreamcast, players can choose to
battle it out in more than 60 environments several of which are all new
just for the Dreamcast with up to eight players online through the
Dreamcast's built-in modem or via the broadband adapter. Or, for those
players that like to taunt their opponents in person they can utilize the
2-to-4-player split-screen option.

The game pits players against the toughest warriors in the galaxy in
multiple contests and fantasy-based settings. The goal is to become the
Unreal Grand Master, testing your skills against, or fighting alongside,
teams of ''bots" or other players.

The first-person perspective action includes deathmatch and team-oriented
modes of play, as well as an enhanced version of Unreal's critically
acclaimed Botmatch, which allows players to compete against extremely
lifelike computer-controlled enemies in deathmatch play.

In addition, Unreal Tournament's advanced artificial intelligence allows
players to lead a squad of computer controlled allies against teams of
human or computer-controlled opponents, taking the team-oriented game play
experience to a new level of immersion.

Unreal Tournament will be available in most retail stores this week with
an estimated retail price of $39.95.


                    Pirates Seize PlayStation 2! LucasArts to Release
                    Acclaimed Escape From Monkey Island on Sony's Next
                           Generation Platform, Spring 2001


Escape from Monkey Island, the fourth chapter of one of interactive
entertainment's most celebrated and comical game series, will be released
for PlayStation 2 by LucasArts Entertainment Company LLC spring 2001. The
critically acclaimed graphic adventure, which debuted on PC last fall,
brings to PlayStation 2 all the salty humor, engaging game play, and fresh
puns (not to mention a ship-load of monkeys!) for which the legendary
series is famous.

Escape from Monkey Island continues in the tradition of its award-winning

predecessors and was developed by the team that created LucasArts'
irreverent classic Sam and Max Hit the Road. Escape from Monkey Island
for PC has been nominated by the Academy of Interactive Arts and Sciences
in three categories for the 2001 Interactive Achievement Awards, including
PC Adventure Game of the Year.

Escape from Monkey Island for PS2 features an original cinematic story full
of drama, intrigue, and of course, highly amusing humor. The game is
highlighted by hundreds of challenging puzzles amidst dozens of rich and
brilliantly rendered backgrounds.

''For the past 10 years owners of PC's have solely been able to enjoy
Monkey Island, one of LucasArts' premier brands," says Tom Byron, director
of product marketing for LucasArts. ''Escape from Monkey Island gives
PlayStation 2 players the chance to be captured by this clever and comical
graphic adventure series."

Escape from Monkey Island finds Guybrush Threepwood and his new bride,
Governor Elaine Marley-Threepwood, returning to Melee Island from their
honeymoon. They quickly discover Elaine has been declared dead, the
Governor's mansion is scheduled for demolition, and the slick, yet
hauntingly familiar politician, Charles L. Charles, is gunning for her job.

While Elaine scrambles to launch a reelection campaign, Guybrush is
dispatched on a seemingly trivial legal errand that catapults him into a
maelstrom of thievery, voodoo, and experimental prosthetic devices. Armed
only with his sharp wit and an uncanny ability to hold his breath for ten
whole minutes, our hero navigates ever deeper into a villainous scheme to
wipe out the Tri-Island Area using the fearsome power of the Ultimate
Insult. Can Guybrush make the Caribbean safe for fun-loving, grog-swilling
pirates, or will the twin forces of heckfire and unbridled capitalism bring
an end to the swashbuckling merriment?


EA Ships Triple Play Baseball for the PlayStation2


Whether it's Pacific Bell Park, Wrigley Field or historic Yankee Stadium,
EA SPORTS takes you out to the ballgame with Triple Play Baseball for the
PlayStation 2 computer entertainment system, released Tuesday by Electronic
Arts.

Triple Play Baseball brings the ballpark experience to life as players can
grab a glove and get on the field in any of the 30 MLB stadiums, including
new Miller Park in Milwaukee and PNC Park in Pittsburgh. Each stadium is
recreated in precise detail with real-time scoreboards and in-park
animations. In addition, Triple Play Baseball features updated 2001 team
schedules and rosters and realistic player models for the ultimate baseball
experience. Players will recognize the likenesses of such star players as
Jason Giambi, Barry Bonds and Derek Jeter.

''I've played video games for years and I am very excited to be working
with EA SPORTS," said Oakland Athletics first baseman Jason Giambi. ''The
graphics in their games are so lifelike. It's amazing how real everything
looks, right down to the swing of my bat. It's also cool to be among guys
like Alex (Rodriguez), Sammy (Sosa) and Mike (Piazza) who've been on the
cover. Triple Play will be a huge hit with the guys in the clubhouse."

Triple Play Baseball offers players four modes to choose from: Single Game,

Season, Playoffs and Big League Challenge. With Season mode, players can move off the field and into the front office where they can put their managerial skills to the test. Whether it's trading a player or signing a free agent, they are in control as they vie for a playoff spot and a shot at the World Series. Triple Play Baseball also gives gamers the chance to put themselves ''in the game." They can live out a childhood dream and become a ball player by creating a customized player where they choose from several batting and pitching styles and then put their name on the jersey.

The exclusive Big League Challenge Mode returns to Triple Play Baseball where players can swing for the fences as some of the best hitters in the league. Players can try to hit one over the ''Green Monster" at Fenway Park or splash one into the pool at Bank One Ballpark or any of the other 30 Major League Ballparks along with Cashman Field in Las Vegas. Choose one-on-one competition between two sluggers to see who can go deep, the most often, or tournament mode where players can battle it out as one of the actual 12 Big League Challenge participants where only one comes out as champion.

''The PlayStation 2 console has allowed us to create a more life-like baseball experience both graphically and with how the game plays," said Triple Play producer Brent Nielsen. ''The next generation console gives us a lot more memory and processing power, bringing the passion and emotion of America's pasttime to life in visually stunning cinematic out-of-play sequences."

Triple Play Baseball Features:

* Pitcher-batter interface utilizes a visible strike zone and batting cursors which gives players total batting control.
* Responsive control on the field with intelligence levels that demonstrate ''player urgency" for players near the ball for throwing, catching and fielding.
* Pressure sensitive throwing controls allow players to make a precise throw after an easy ground ball to short or speed things up with power throws to turn the difficult 5-4-3 double play.
* New to the Triple Play franchise are 2 additional cameras: Fielding and Pitcher/Batter cameras that create a ''Depth of Field" effect. Both provide precise angles on the play and the ball, giving the baseball diamond an authentic, TV-like feel.
* Instant Replay can verify if the ump made the right call or replay an impressive diving catch in the outfield.
* Cinematic out-of-play sequences bring the ballpark to life with player high-fives, umpire arguments and end of game celebrations.
* Play-by-play scripts and recordings by Sean McDonough and color commentary by new Toronto Blue Jays Manager, Buck Martinez.
* Original Soundtrack featuring Chuck D, formerly of Public Enemy, Vitamin C, Utah Saints and Fastball, keeps the crowds alive and the game player immersed in the experience.

Triple Play Baseball for the PlayStation 2 console is rated ''E" (Everyone) by the ESRB.


                    Acclaim Sports' All-Star Baseball 2002 for
                    PlayStation 2 Computer Entertainment System


Acclaim Sports announced that All-Star Baseball 2002 for the PlayStation2

computer entertainment system will begin shipping to retail outlets
nationwide on Friday, March 16th.

''All-Star Baseball 2002 for the PlayStation2 computer entertainment
system truly represents a new generation of baseball excellence," said
Steve Felsen, Director, or Brand Management. ''Our heralded franchise
provides an unrivaled experience of putting the gamer inside the
ballpark."

Developed by Acclaim Studios Austin under license from Major League
Baseball Properties and the MLB Players Association, All-Star Baseball 2002
has been praised by industry press who have previewed the title's
breakthrough graphics and gameplay. The franchise is widely regarded in the
video game industry as the premier baseball series, having been previously
selected as ''Baseball Game of the Year" by readers of GamePro magazine
and honored with Editors Choice Awards from Electronic Gaming Monthly and
Imagine Games Network.

''I'm very proud to be associated with All-Star Baseball 2002," said four
time World Series champion and product spokesman Derek Jeter. ''I am very
selective with the products I choose to endorse and All-Star Baseball 2002
continues to reign as the world champion of baseball video games."

All-Star Baseball 2002 Features Include:

  * All 30 MLB teams and over 750 players including 250 real-life
    faces
  * All 30 MLB stadiums with active dugouts & bullpens, real-time
    scoreboards & jumbotrons
  * Cooperstown Hall of Fame team including Reggie Jackson, Mike Schmidt
    and Nolan Ryan
  * ''Turn Back the Clock" with classic uniforms for each team
  * Color commentary from Arizona Diamondbacks' new manager Bob Brenly,
    and play by play from his former TV partner Thom Brennaman
  * 130+ unique player batting stances & 50 pitching deliveries
  * Future Throw technology for super-smooth catches & throws
  * General Manager Mode - Trade, sign free agents & draft players
  * Game Modes include Exhibition, Season, Home Run Derby & Batting
    Practice


           Infogrames, Inc. Revolutionizes the Racing Genre With
             Test Drive - Coming to Sony PlayStation2 This Fall


Put the pedal to the metal this Fall courtesy of Infogrames, Inc.

The company announced that its top-selling racing franchise, the Test Drive
series, is coming to Sony PlayStation2 with Test Drive.

With more than three million copies sold, the Test Drive series has enjoyed
tremendous commercial success.

Utilizing the power of the PlayStation2, the new Test Drive will surpass
any Test Drive game to date with its advances in technology and superior
graphics. The game will be available Fall 2001.

''The new Test Drive has everything necessary to be the best racing game
ever," said Laddie Ervin, director of marketing for sports and racing at

Infogrames' San Jose Label.

''With superior technology, lightning quick racing action and the
stunningly realistic graphics, it's going to blow the competition away this
Fall."

Developed by the Pitbull Syndicate, Test Drive continues the successful
formula of the Test Drive series with players racing some of the world's
most sought-after licensed vehicles in exotic real-world locations. Whether
a player is looking for the prestige and strength of an exotic sports car
or the raw power and rugged good looks of an American muscle car, the game
will offer something for every taste. The fast-paced Hollywood-style racing
action in Test Drive will find players blowing through crowded city streets
with the cops on their tail as pedestrians flee and cross traffic comes at
them from every which way.

With a brand new, built-from-scratch graphics engine designed to take
advantage of the PlayStation2 technology, the game will utilize numerous
cutting edge graphics techniques that maximize visual realism. Some of the
techniques utilized in the game include anti-aliasing, mip-mapping,
real-time lighting and multi-level reflection mapping. With these
technologies implemented, players will experience real-time shadows and
lighting on cars, throughout the game's environments, including on cars and
people.

To accomplish the feel of a crowded and realistically interactive
environment in Test Drive, the artificial intelligence (AI) editor in the
game has been designed to orchestrate street intersections and vehicle
responses in complex ways. For example, vehicle traffic and pedestrians
will respond appropriately to traffic signals changing from green to red.
People will jump out of the way of cars as they come closer and city
traffic and other moving vehicles will be choreographed to create mayhem
heightening gameplay.

A partnership between Infogrames, Inc. and Staccato Systems, Inc. means
Test Drive will also have the most true-to-life engine sounds and audio
available. Staccato Systems, a subsidiary of Analog Devices, Inc., provides
SoundMAX with SPX technology that creates sound in real-time instead of
playing back static sound from a pre-recorded file. The interactive
synthesized sound and audio processing can be uniquely changed and
controlled in real-time. The technology means that players of Test Drive
will be able to distinguish intricate sounds such as the difference between
certain car engines. For example, a player will be able to differentiate
between the turbo charger on a turbo V6 engine and the deep bass boar of a
normally aspirated big block V8. For more information on Staccato's sound
technology visit www.staccatosys.com.

Test Drive for the PlayStation2 is developed by the Pitbull Syndicate and
will offer a fully licensed soundtrack. The game will also have 2-player
multiplayer options via split screen and dual shock and analog controller
support.


                    Disney's Aladdin in Nasira's Revenge Takes
                       Players on a Magical Adventure



Sony Computer Entertainment America Inc. has announced the release of
Disney's Aladdin in Nasira's Revenge available exclusively for the

PlayStation game console and the PS one console. Disney's Aladdin in Nasira's Revenge offers true, signature Disney-style gameplay with animated characters, humorous antics, animated actions and a comical storyline.

Featuring the original cast of characters, gamers can take on the role of Aladdin, Abu and Jasmine at different points of the adventure while journeying across nine vibrant, lively environments including: Agrabah, The Sultan's Palace, The Dungeon, The Oasis, The Cave of Wonders, The Pyramids, The Crumbled Palace, The Ancient City and Nasira's Lair. Throughout their adventure, players will encounter colorful and exuberant worlds, intense battles between good and evil, heart-pumping chases, and a combination of exploration, humor and puzzles.

''We are always excited about the opportunity to bring Disney's stories and characters to life on the PlayStation game console," said Ami Blaire, director, product marketing, Sony Computer Entertainment America Inc. ''Software titles such as Disney's Aladdin in Nasira's Revenge allow us to offer PlayStation fans true entertainment that's fun for the entire family."

Filled with action-packed gameplay, Disney's Aladdin in Nasira's Revenge delivers frantic battle scenes against a slew of diverse enemies, white-knuckle chases through city streets and ancient pyramids, methodical puzzle solving and rip-roaring adventure, all complemented with brilliant cinematic scenes and voices from the original Disney animated series to advance the story.

Disney's Aladdin in Nasira's Revenge takes place in the fabled city of Agrabah where the Sultan's Palace has been taken over by Jafar's evil sister, Nasira. She has come to avenge her brother's death by banishing the Sultan and his daughter, Jasmine, to the outskirts of Agrabah. Nasira places a spell on the entire city and commands that Aladdin be brought to her immediately.

Along with characters Aladdin, Abu, Jasmine, Iago, the Sultan, Genie, Jafar and The Magic Carpet, players can utilize tons of acrobatic moves such as jumping, bouncing, running, sliding, throwing, swinging on ropes, climbing, sneaking past enemies and surfing on a genie-board. As players find hidden gems, they will enter into Genie's world filled with unique sub-games and collectible bonuses. When they have collected enough tokens, players can use them toward Genie's wishes, granting additional lives and other bonuses.

Key features in Disney's Aladdin in Nasira's Revenge include:

    -- Nine vibrant, lively environments:  Agrabah, The Sultan's Palace,
       Dungeon, Oasis, The Cave of Wonders, The Pyramids, The Crumbled Palace,
       Ancient City and Nasira's Lair
    -- Fun characters to control:  Play Aladdin, Abu and Jasmine at different
       points during the adventure and fly The Magic Carpet in
       adrenaline-pumping chases
    -- Tons of acrobatic moves to perform:  Jump, bounce, run, slide, throw,
       pull, fly on The Magic Carpet, swing on ropes, climb and sneak past
       enemies
    -- A variety of Aladdin attack moves:  Pick up and throw multiple
       projectiles, fight with a sword and discover other location-specific
       special weapons
    -- Bonus Levels and Genie Bonuses:  Locate hidden gems to open up Genie's
       bonus world filled with unique sub-games and collectible bonuses; use
       Genie's wishes to grant you additional lives and bonuses

-- Fun items to collect:  Genie Tokens, Extra lives, Multi-colored Gems,
             Sultan Coins and Health Pick-ups all based on the popular animated
             series
          -- The voices from the original animated television series, Disney's
             Aladdin
          -- Fast-paced action-platform puzzles, hazards of all kinds and sizes and
             bonus levels and hidden bonuses; bonus and secret areas add another
             element to gameplay

The independent Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) rates Disney's
Aladdin in Nasira's Revenge ''E" for ''Everyone" with the descriptor
''Animated Violence."


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                         A-ONE's Headline News
                    The Latest in Computer Technology News
                       Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson


                Canadian Firm Uses Pig Latin to Fool Napster Block


A Canadian company has introduced software intended to help millions of
frustrated Napster users to continue downloading free music, the National
Post reported on Monday.

PulseNewMedia, a company affiliated with the University of Toronto, is
using pig Latin to disguise Napster file names that are to be blocked this
week.

Once installed, the software alters the names of MP3 files, moving the
first letter to the end of the word. The band Metallica, for instance,
would become ettalicam.

Napster, which has about 60 million users worldwide, has already begun
filtering song titles in order to block access.

Under a court injunction issued on March 5, Napster is required to bar the
transfer of songs specified within three days of notification by the
copyright holders.

PulseNewMedia says they have already had more than 20,000 downloads of
their program, the Post reported.

The software mirrors a program released March 4 by U.S. company Aimster,
whose software lets users trade files by piggybacking on instant message
networks.

Aimster Chief Executive Officer Johnny Deep said last week that changing
file names with encryption makes it illegal to systematically remove the
altered files.

Deep said Napster might be able to remove encrypted file names one by one,
but it couldn't ''reverse engineer" the Pig Encoder to remove all songs

that had been encrypted -- even though the encryption is so simple that anyone can deduce the real title of an encrypted file name.

The Digital Millennium Copyright Act outlaws the reverse engineering of encryption schemes, Deep said. Encryption is defined as ''the scrambling and descrambling of information using mathematical formulas or algorithms."


### Aimster Removes Pig Encoder at Request of Napster


File-sharing firm Aimster on Wednesday said it has removed from its Web site a program based on pig Latin that enabled Napster users to get around court-ordered restrictions on the popular song-swap service.

''At the request of Napster, Aimster has removed the Pig Encoder Software from public distribution through its Web site," said Aimster Chief Executive Officer Johnny Deep, adding that the encoder was removed as of Tuesday morning.

''We do this out of respect for Napster's efforts to maintain its own service for its own users as it deems best," Deep said, but added that Aimster bears no responsibility if the encoder is distributed by users on Aimster's private messaging service or Web sites administered by Aimster users.

Aimster, whose software lets users trade files by piggybacking on instant message networks, released the free Aimster Pig Encoder program on March 4 on its Web site (http://www.aimster.com/pigencoder.phtml).

A Canadian firm, PulseNewMedia, released a similar program this week as Napster attempts to comply with a preliminary injunction issued on March 5 by the U.S. District Court in San Francisco, which requires it to remove songs from its service within three business days of notification by copyright holders.

Napster's service has attracted about 60 million users who swap songs for free by trading MP3 files, a compression format that turns music on compact discs into small digital files.

The injunction was the result of a 15-month-long legal battle which has come to be viewed as a landmark case on copyrights in cyberspace, seen defining how music, books and entertainment will be distributed online.

The world's biggest record labels -- including Vivendi Universal's Universal Music, Sony Music, Warner Music, EMI Group Plc and Bertelsmann AG's BMG first sued Napster in December 1999, claiming it was a haven for copyright piracy that would cost them billions of dollars in lost music sales.

Last Friday, the labels e-mailed Napster a list of 135,000 songs, including music from Elvis Presley to Eminem, for their removal. Napster late Monday, however, said much of the list was duplicated and not in compliance with the injunction.

''Wednesday's not going to be the be-all end-all," Napster CEO Hank Barry said on Monday.

Barry said Napster so far has screened 115,000 unique file names, representing 26,000 songs with artists and titles associated with them. A spokeswoman on Wednesday said that more file names would be screened by late Wednesday.

Amy Weiss, a spokeswoman for the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) on Tuesday said the organization was not going to debate the fine points of the order's implementation.

''We believe the court's intent is clear. Napster is required to stop infringing. Stall tactics are unacceptable," she said.

While Napster has begun blocking access to some files, its efforts have been thwarted by users who have changed file names by deliberately misspelling titles or by using programs like the Pig Encoder to change names.

With the Pig Encoder, '''Music' becomes 'usicM,' 'Hello' becomes 'elloH,' the Aimster Web site said.

On Tuesday, Napster also announced it had aligned with Gracenote Inc., a maker of music recognition services, to help it in its file-filtering efforts.

Some experts on Wednesday said that while Gracenote's services will be an improvement over Napster's current method of file identification, it still had limitations since Gracenote's method of file identification does not handle pig Latin-type conversions or any other code naming applications.


Napster Music Trading Drops As Filter Kicks In


Napster users are sharing almost 60 percent fewer digital music files since the embattled Internet song-swap service began implementing new filters to block copyrighted material, a company which tracks Web traffic said on Thursday.

''Napster is successfully filtering many songs from its system," said analyst Matt Bailey of the Cambridge, Mass.-based firm Webnoize. ''It is not just the number of files available that has fallen sharply. The number of downloads per user has dropped by half."

Webnoize said that prior to Napster's latest filtering effort, which took effect at about 9 p.m. Eastern time Wednesday, Napster users were sharing an average of 172 song files each. With the new filter, the number of songs made available for sharing fell to 71 per user, down 59 percent.

Napster officials had no immediate comment on the reported drop in file sharing, which took place the day after they enlisted Gracenote Inc., a maker of music recognition services, to help boost file-filtering efforts.

While the filter, implemented in an effort to comply with a federal court injunction ordered March 5, appeared to be having some effect, Webnoize said Napster appeared still to be offering plenty of music by artists identified by the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) as under copyright.

These songs -- by artists ranging from rap star Eminem to Elvis Presley --

could be easily downloaded, Webnoize said. Songs by other artists such as 98 Degrees were available if users added certain characters to a title search.

''As those problems get ironed out, and also as new titles added to the list also get blocked out, the filter will start to block significantly more songs than are being blocked now," Bailey said.

Napster, engaged in a legal fight for its life, says it has been struggling to block out a list of some 135,000 copyrighted songs provided last week by the RIAA. Further song titles have been added to the list this week.

Napster's service, invented by a teen-aged college student, has become a worldwide phenomenon, attracting about 60 million users who swap songs for free by trading MP3 files, a compression format that turns music on compact discs into small digital files.

The RIAA, representing some of the most powerful forces in the recording industry, has accused Napster of enabling widespread music piracy -- launching a lengthy court battle which many industry analysts say could define how music, books and entertainment are distributed in the digital age.

This month's injunction requires Napster to remove copyrighted material within three business days of being notified by the RIAA.

Last Friday, the labels e-mailed Napster a preliminary list of 135,000 songs targeted for removal. Napster has argued that much of the list was duplicated and not in compliance with the terms of the injunction. On Monday, Napster Chief Executive Hank Barry said the service had screened 115,000 unique file names representing 26,000 songs with artists and titles associated with them.

By late Wednesday, Napster officials were saying they had taken action to block an undetermined further number of files representing some 60,000 songs with artists and titles associated with them.

Bailey said Wednesday's upgraded filter -- which caused the online song-swap system to go offline briefly Wednesday -- was "the first really significant step that Napster has taken toward complying with the court's injunction."

He added that it appeared that Napster was making efforts to block variations in song file title names, heading off user attempts to avoid the filter by making subtle changes in file titles such as listing songs by the group Metallica under the name ''Metallika".

''They could have taken a pretty passive view on these measures, but instead they really are trying to prove to record labels that they are serious about security and can control the network," Bailey said. ''They will be increasing the number of variations of song titles that get blocked by the system."

While Napster's efforts to comply with the injunction may win the service points with the court, it was unclear whether the company can hold on to its avid fan base if it no longer offers much of the world's most popular music for free.

Bailey said that anecdotal evidence already indicated that users were already switching to other peer-to-peer song swap systems such as Music

City and Gnutella, and predicted that the flight of Napster users to rival systems would accelerate as more songs are blocked.

''There are some pretty good alternative systems around. It is only going to be a matter of days before Napster users start migrating to those systems in large numbers," Bailey said. ''The sort of loyalty that we are seeing among Napster users is going to be very temporary."


## Net Tax Measure May Pave Way For Fees


The leading bill being considered by Congress to sort out the mess of collecting sales taxes online creates the possibility of future fees on Internet access.

This is one of the most significant differences between the bill introduced last week by Sen. Byron Dorgan, D-N.D., and a similar one introduced earlier this year by Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore. Wyden's bill has only gained the support of Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt.; Dorgan's bill had 10 Republican and Democratic co-sponsors on its first day.

There have been very few government attempts to tax Internet access, but it has emerged as one of the greatest fears of online users. For some time now a multitude of people have been forwarding to friends a fraudulent e-mail about a nonexistent bill that would impose per-minute fees on Web surfers.

Though the e-mail was not real, cities and towns that imposed such fees before 1998 may continue to impose them as they were grandfathered under the Internet tax moratorium imposed that year. That moratorium expires in October.

"The current expiration date for the moratorium on Internet access and discriminatory taxes is fast approaching," Dorgan said. "The moratorium should be extended."

Dorgan's bill extends the moratorium to Dec. 31, 2005, after which local governments would be free to impose access taxes if the moratorium were not extended. In contrast, Wyden's bill calls for an outright ban of access taxes and seeks to remove the grandfathering protection of those few municipalities currently applying the tax.

Senate Commerce Committee Chairman John McCain, R-Ariz., will hold a hearing Wednesday on the Internet tax issue, in what his spokeswoman Pia Pialorsi said will be his "first step toward building consensus" and eventually introducing his own bill. Wyden's bill was referred to his committee, but Dorgan's was sent to the Senate Finance Committee.

One boost to Dorgan's bill is that it is the first piece of Internet tax legislation developed in cooperation with state and local governments. Congress last year was reluctant to completely pre-empt local authority on sales taxes and would prefer states to work out a method to simplify sales taxes so they can more easily be collected by e-tailers.

"Businesses and consumers using the Internet to conduct commerce are potentially subject to as many as 30,000 tax jurisdictions," said Business Software Alliance President Robert Holleyman.

Dorgan's bill would call on states to develop a one-stop source for e-tailers to gain tax information and would require uniform definitions for goods so taxes would be equitable. If 20 states were to join a compact to this effect, they could submit the plan to Congress and, if it were approved, e-tailers would be forced to collect sales taxes based on where the purchaser was located.

The bill is backed by the National Governors' Association, the National Conference of State Legislatures, the Council of State Governments, the National Association of Counties, the U.S. Conference of Mayors and the International City/County Management Association. It also has the support of the E-Fairness Coalition, which comprises mainly so-called brick-and-mortar retailers.

Dorgan's key Republican supporter is Mike Enzi, R-Wyo. Though he opposes an Internet access tax--"I do not support a tax on the use of the Internet itself"--he co-sponsored the bill because it will protect local sales taxes.

"I have concerns about using the Internet as a sales tax loophole," he said. "Sales taxes go directly to state and local governments and I am very leery of any federal legislation that bypasses their traditional ability to raise revenue to perform needed services such as school funding, road repair and law enforcement. I will not force states into a huge new exemption."

Along with banning Internet access fees, Wyden's bill sets a higher hurdle for states to clear before they can get Congress' help in collecting sales taxes from e-tailers.

Because the access tax would be subject to a moratorium extending more than four years, industry trade groups have not yet come out opposed. For example, the Information Technology Industry Association is taking an open stance, citing the primary importance of extending the current moratorium. The Information Technology Industry Council has taken a similar position.


U.S. To Extend Internet Tax Ban - For Now


Consumers worried about Internet taxes can continue to breathe easy -- at least, for now. The Internet Tax Freedom Act expires in about six months, but the U.S. Congress appears ready to extend it.

The Senate is currently considering three Internet tax-related bills. The one with the broadest bipartisan support would extend the Internet Tax Freedom Act until the end of 2005.

That measure was introduced last week by Senator Byron Dorgan (D-North Dakota) and was co-sponsored by 10 other senators.

However, though the tangled web that is the Internet sales tax debate will not be resolved any time soon, the eventual imposition of sales tax on Internet purchases seems likely.

A second measure, proposed by Senator Ron Wyden (D-Oregon), would extend the ban on some Internet taxes until the end of 2006 and permanently ban taxes on Internet access.

A bill similar to Wyden's passed the House last year by a significant margin, but his bill did not make the cut in the Senate, Carol Guthrie, a press aide to Senator Wyden, told NewsFactor Network.

A third measure, proposed by Senator Bob Smith (R-New Hampshire), would make the federal ban on Internet taxes permanent and would not allow states to impose sales taxes on citizens of other states.

This would, in effect, preclude sales taxes on Internet purchases, an aide to Senator Smith told NewsFactor.

All three bills have been referred to committees. However, while the Dorgan bill was referred to the powerful Finance Committee, the other two were referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation.

Contrary to popular belief, the Internet Tax Freedom Act, which was passed in 1998, does not ban sales tax on goods sold online. Rather, it precludes taxes on Internet access; duplicate taxes on transactions that two or more states could tax; and discriminatory taxes that would tax specific products online that are not taxed offline.

For practical purposes, no one has figured out an easy way to collect sales tax on goods sold online by a company in one state to a consumer in another.

The Dorgan bill would have Congress help states collect taxes from e-tailers only after state and local governments collectively work to simplify the task.

Under current laws, if all states and local governments mandated that online retailers collect the appropriate sales taxes, e-tailers would have to learn the rules in more than 7,000 tax locations.

Similarly, the Wyden bill urges states to streamline their tax rates.

A variety of state, county and municipal government associations, including The National Conference of State Legislatures and the National Governors Association, support the Dorgan bill, which would eventually pave the way for the collection of sales taxes on the Internet.

They have a vested interest in the measure. Forrester Research estimates that local governments missed out on more than US$500 million in tax payments in 1999 because no effective way of charging sales tax on Internet purchases currently exists.


U.S. Congress Set To Tackle Spammers


To unclog e-mail boxes and free up bandwidth for small Internet service providers (ISPs) and Web users, U.S. lawmakers are pushing bills through Congress to target unsolicited e-mail and set criminal penalties for spammers who use false e-mail addresses.

The 2001 Anti Spamming Act, introduced by Representative Robert Goodlatte (R-Virginia), makes it a criminal offense to fraudulently use another individual's Internet address to send unsolicited e-mail, known as spam, and sets penalties of up to US$15,000 ($10 per e-mail) and liability for victims' monetary losses.

While industry studies point to skyrocketing rates of unwanted bulk e-mail being sent to Web users, legislators hope the latest round of bills, some of which are being reintroduced with refinements for the 107th Congress, will become law this time.

"Unsolicited e-mail, such as advertisements, solicitations or chain letters, is the 'junk mail' of the information age," said Rep. Goodlatte, whose Internet Freedom Act last year included similar legislation but was stalled in Congress. "This legislation gives law enforcement the tools they need to prevent unsolicited e-mail from clogging up citizens' in-boxes."

Goodlatte's bill, which now includes criminal penalties for spamming, joins another renewed anti-spam effort from Rep. Heather Wilson (R-New Mexico) and Rep. Gene Green (D-Texas), whose anti-spam bill goes to the House Telecommunications Subcommittee next week.

"As consumers, we should have the power to stop getting junk e-mail on our computers or on the computers of our children," said Rep. Wilson, whose Unsolicited Commercial E-Mail Act of 2001 aims to block spam for consumers. "Some estimates are that over one third of junk e-mail is pornographic and currently parents are helpless to stop this form entering their home."

"We feel very good," Wilson spokesman Kevin McDermott told NewsFactor Network. "We passed it in the House last year virtually unanimously and it got stuck in the Senate, but it was mainly because of political reasons. There were no major policy disagreements."

A Goodlatte representative told NewsFactor that the congressman's bill, to be referred to the House Judiciary Committee this month, aims at protecting Internet users from scams and bogus e-mails, and service providers who lose bandwidth and other resources because of spam.

"It's going to benefit consumers because of no slow connections and unwanted messages - and it will benefit ISPs because their servers can run without this junk mail clogging them," said Goodlatte press secretary Michelle Semones.

A statement from Goodlatte's office says that spam has "paralyzed small ISPs by flooding their servers with unwanted e-mail. This has the potential to do great damage to small ISP companies and the communities they serve."

Internet research firm Jupiter Media Metrix reports that the average consumer received 40 pieces of spam in 1999. But by 2005, that figure is forecast to explode to some 1,600 pieces of unwanted mail.


Let The Music Play - Sony Unveils Double-density CD-RWs


Sony is aiming to double the pleasure of CD-R and CD-RW lovers.

On Tuesday, the consumer electronics giant unveiled Double Density CD-R and CD-RW drives and discs.

Dubbed DD-R and DD-RW, the discs can hold 1.3GB of data. That is twice the

capacity of CD-R and CD-RW discs, which hold 650MB. The technology doubles the capacity of the discs by essentially shrinking the space between the tracks on the media.

The drives will be available in retail stores by the beginning of April and will cost $249. DD-R discs will cost $1.99 each, and DD-RW discs will cost $2.99.

Sony's new products are an attempt to provide a middle solution between CD-RWs and their giant cousin, DVD-rewritable discs, which offer 4.7GB of capacity.

"With a 1.3GB capacity, users can now get the best of both worlds, but not at twice the price," said Bob DeMoulin, a product marketing manager at Sony.

By contrast, Pioneer plans to start selling around May an add-on version of its drive that can play and record both DVDs and CDs. Pioneer's drive is expected to sell for around $1,000, with the discs costing $10 to $20 apiece.

Still, Dataquest analyst Mary Craig said Sony's new technology faces considerable obstacles.

"The price and capacity make a lot of sense to me in terms of addressing a middle ground, but the disturbing sign is that Sony is the only manufacturer stepping up to address this middle ground. That's not a good sign," Craig said. For any new technology to take off, it needs a number of companies to champion its cause.

Other companies may take a pass on double-density technology because a DVD-rewritable standard may be just around the corner.

"The looming DVD-rewritable technologies will be a challenge," Craig said.

But as long as the industry continues to squabble over a DVD-rewritable standard, DD-R and DD-RW may have a window of opportunity. There are three different specifications being considered by manufacturers: DVD+RW, DVD-R and DVD-RAM. The competing technologies have the potential to fragment the market and confuse consumers with compatibility issues.

DD-R and DD-RW are not completely clear of compatibility issues themselves. The DD-R/DD-RW drive will be able to read and write CD-R and CD-RW discs. But existing CD and CD-RW drives won't be able to play DD-R and DD-RW discs.

"While you can't share DD-R and DD-RW media with CD-RW owners, you can still record onto CD-RW and share that way. So I think they're covered in that sense," Craig said.

Sony's approach to marketing the new technology will have a major effect on how well it is accepted, Craig said, though it may help that Sony's new technology is based on an familiar one, CD-RW. Dataquest forecasts that manufacturers will ship more than 38 million CD-RW drives in 2001.

"We're playing off a technology that is already known, CD-RW, so we have instant understanding on the user's part," DeMoulin said.

However, he acknowledged, PC manufacturers are unlikely to incorporate Sony's new drive immediately given the weakness in computer sales.

"We've had talks with manufacturers and they're interested. But PC buyers
are especially sensitive to price right now and they don't want to add
cost to systems," DeMoulin said.

Craig agreed. "This is more of an after-market product," she said,
referring to merchandise that people buy after they purchase a PC. "After
this trial-balloon stage, if demand is good, it will send a message to
manufacturers."

The Sony Double Density ATAPI CRS200E-A1 is an internal drive with a
maximum write speed for DD-R and CD-R of 12X, a maximum write speed of
DD-RW and CD-RW of 8X, and a maximum play speed for CDs of 32X.


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